

BETICO'S ARUBA: DUTCH PROPERTY.

After the June 1977 elections for the Central Government in the Antilles, Mr. B. Croes and his M.E.P. promised to come with actions which would undermine the authority of the Willemstad-based Central Government. And so he did. The Bestuurscollege (B.C.) being a MEP-instrument now, and because of the recent MEP-victory in the elections made it rather easy for that authority to be undermined in Aruba.

And so a little hell broke loose on Aruba. And this little hell became a bigger hell when the political 'champion' of Curaçao, D.P.'s Rozendal, refused to take up the MEP, the Aruban 'champ', in his cabinet.

Two labour Union leaders were arrested for distributing 'inflammatory' pamphlets; then demonstrations and a general strike was organised.

Then the water-supply on the island was not enough for the people or for the tourist, the A.L.M.-connections with Aruba were broken, no telephone-connection was possible, and there was no electricity on the island. It was almost complete chaos, for there was also a shortage of some food-stuffs.

And Evertsz' out-going government and Rozendal's in-coming government decided to send a hundred (100) Antillean riot-

troops from Curaçao to Aruba (with some help from the Dutch expeditionary force in the Antilles). A few ministers and the attorney-general also went to Aruba.



We heard that the B.C. was surrounded, that one person was injured and that a bullit went through a jeep owned by Betico Croes or the MEP. And...a scenario (draaiboek) for the further undermining of the Central Government was found, it belonged to one of the labour union leaders.

The labour leaders were released from prison, and the Dutch government in the Hague promised to receive a delegation from Aruba, composed of representatives of the political parties, the labour unions and trade and industry. They would explain the problems and wishes of Aruba to the Dutch, once again.

The actions and the demon-

strations were stopped and Aruba, a Dutch island in the Caribbean Sea, became calm again.

The economic lost nor the sufferings of the people (for Betico's goal?) has been calculated as yet.

But what is Betico's goal??

An Aruba apart from Curaçao and directly under the Dutch colonial (or semi-colonial) rule!! Betico's goal isn't INDEPENDENCE as the Referendum of the 25th of March 1977 might have led some of us to believe. Until some distant date in the future all that the Aruban trade and industry and its MEP and the MEP-labour unions want is direct ties with the Netherlands and that the Dutch will continue taking care of Foreign Affairs and External Defence and the Court of Appeal (cassation), and of course that Aruba will continue getting aid from the Netherlands and the EEC.

We have also heard that 70.000 Dutch guilders were spent for the stay of the 3-party delegation from Aruba in the Schiphol Hilton Hotel in the Netherlands. That is quite an amount, and what was achieved?, we ask ourselves.

If we weren't here in Holland, to hear with our ears, and one of our friends did tell us, we would've said: they lie!. Although we were here and saw, we still think they are fooling us, we cannot understand how Betico can believe a.....Colonial Power.

The Netherlands do not only have a colonial Past, but they also have a colonial Present and a colonial Future. And this will be so as long as we have reason to call those six islands in the Caribbean Sea, Dutch Antilles. In the past the Dutch imposed the colonial system on us, and that system is now causing all that friction and enmity between the islands' governments and the islands' people.

The question still is: What is it that they achieved; what did they get to take home to keep the people quiet?, as Betico himself put it. They got A promise from the Dutch that the new minister of Antillean Affairs will visit the Antilles soon after his appointment. And there will be a triangle meeting with this Dutch minister, the Central Government and the Aruban Island Council (see the communiqué of 10-9-1977 of the Kingdom Government). And such a promise was enough for the MEP-delegation to go back to Aruba with, not too unhappy (the big question is, of course, what else was promised and who it was promised by???)

Now the MEP and Betico c.s., mistakenly portrayed in some parts of the Dutch press and news media as anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist, is back in the sun, shadow-boxing with the Central Government; a Central Government which consists of nothing more than a set of mocking-birds of Dutch and other imperialists' governments and ruling-class: the capitalists, the bourgeoisie.